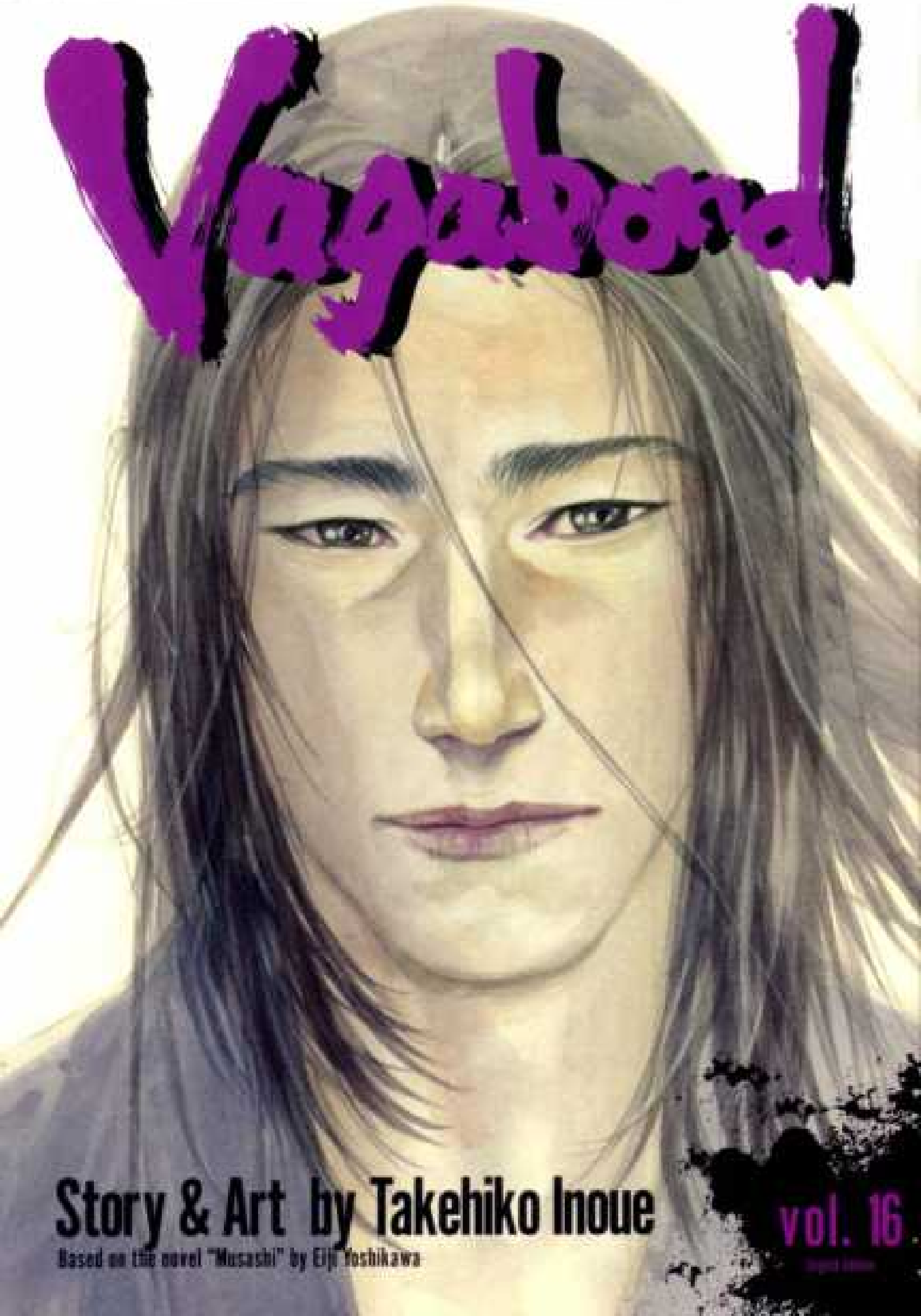
editor's choice

Vagabond



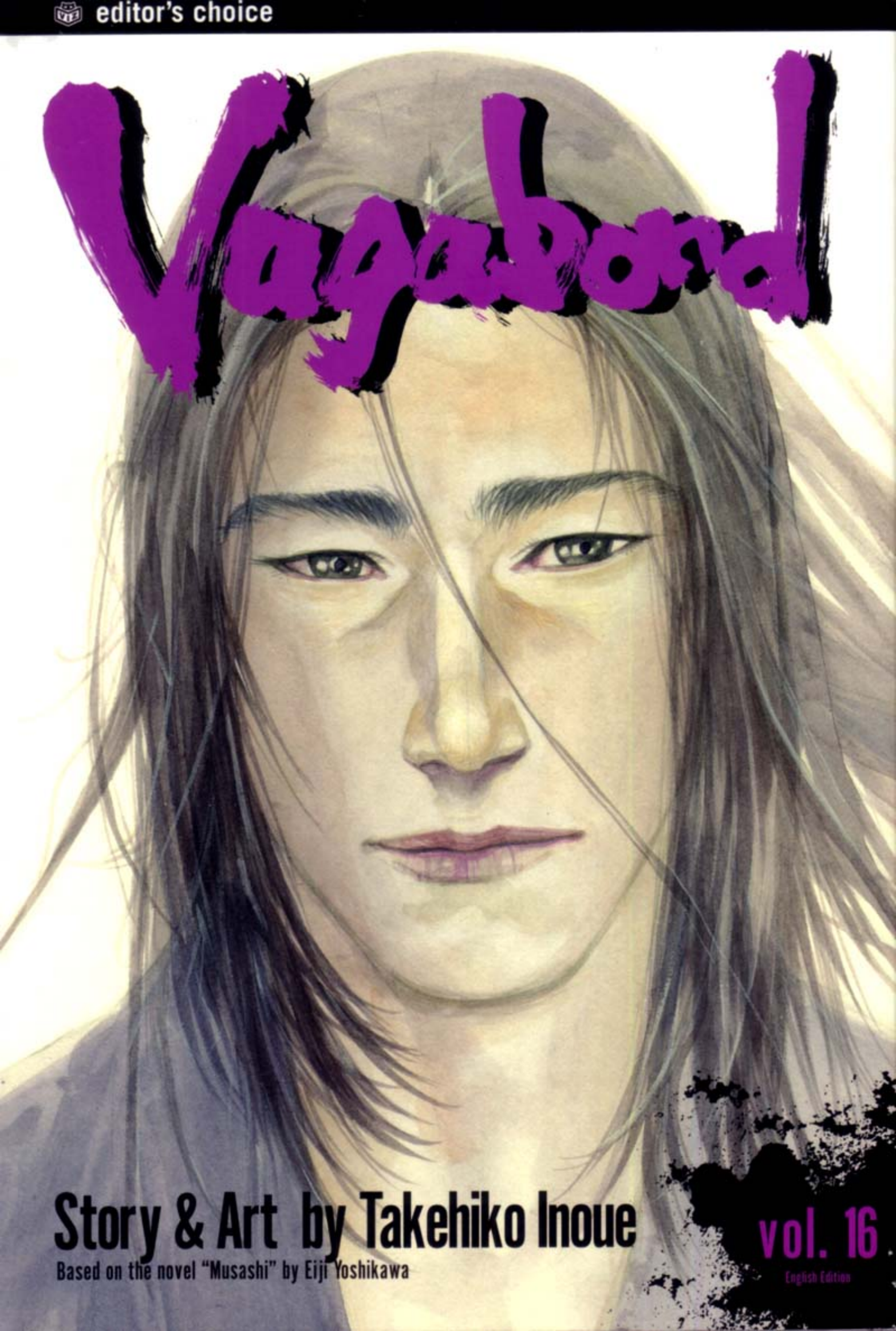
Story & Art by Takehiko Inoue

Based on the novel "Musashi" by Eiji Yoshikawa

vol. 16

editor's choice

Vagabond



Story & Art by Takehiko Inoue

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vol. 16

English Edition

Vagabond Vol. 16

Story & Art by
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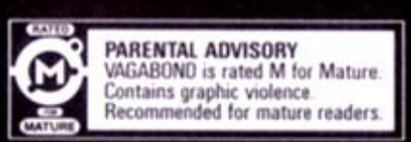

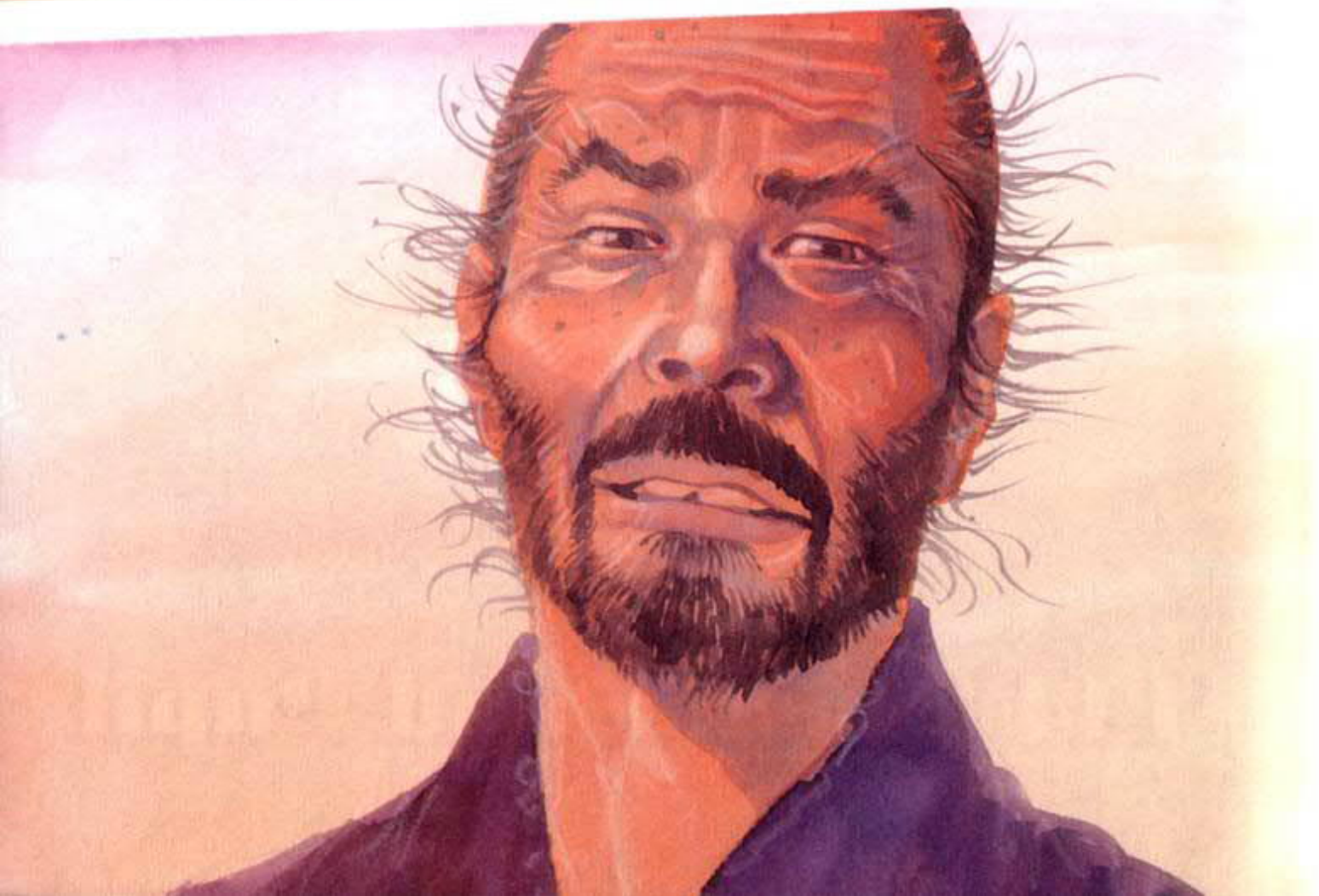

Vagabond

vol. 16

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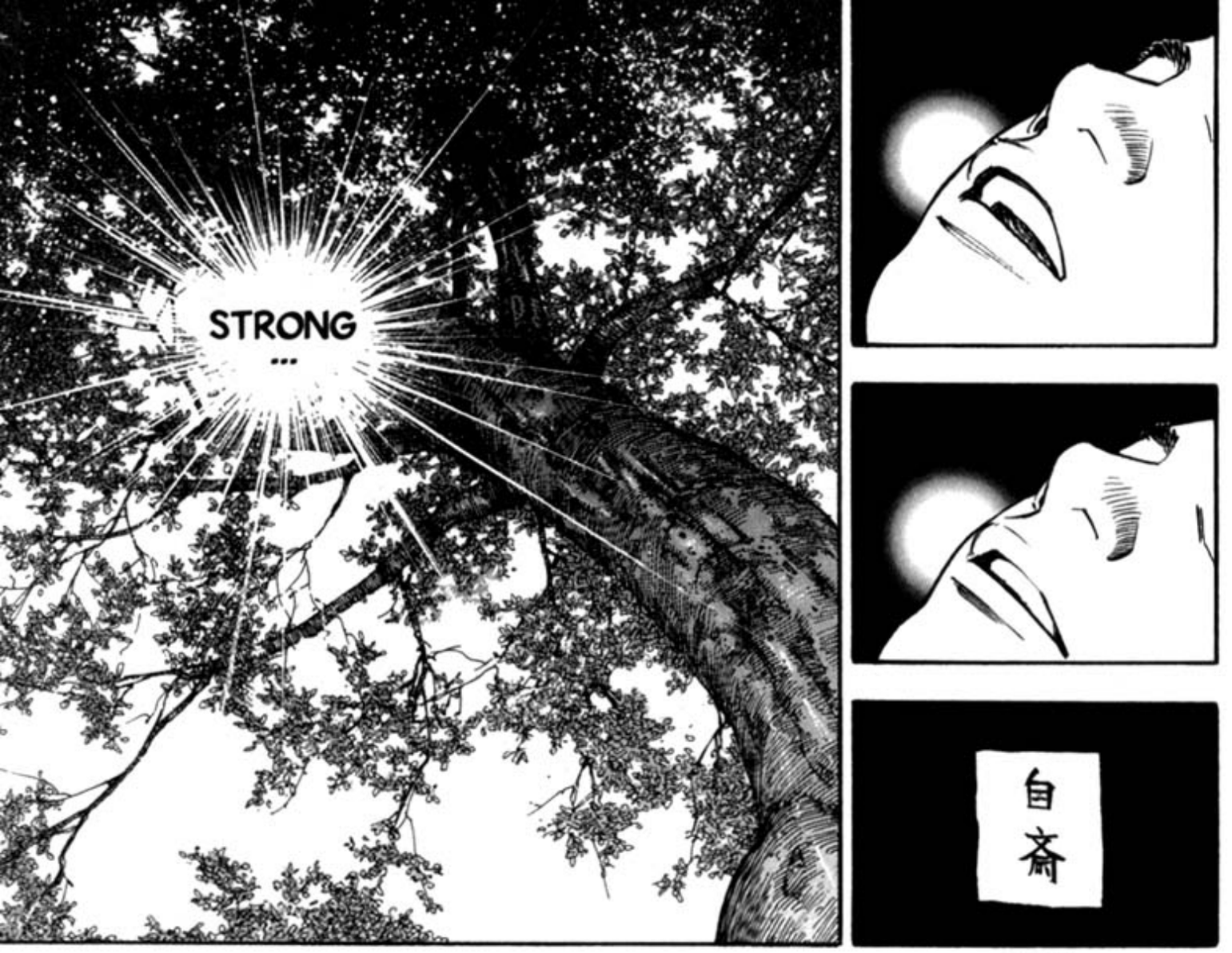
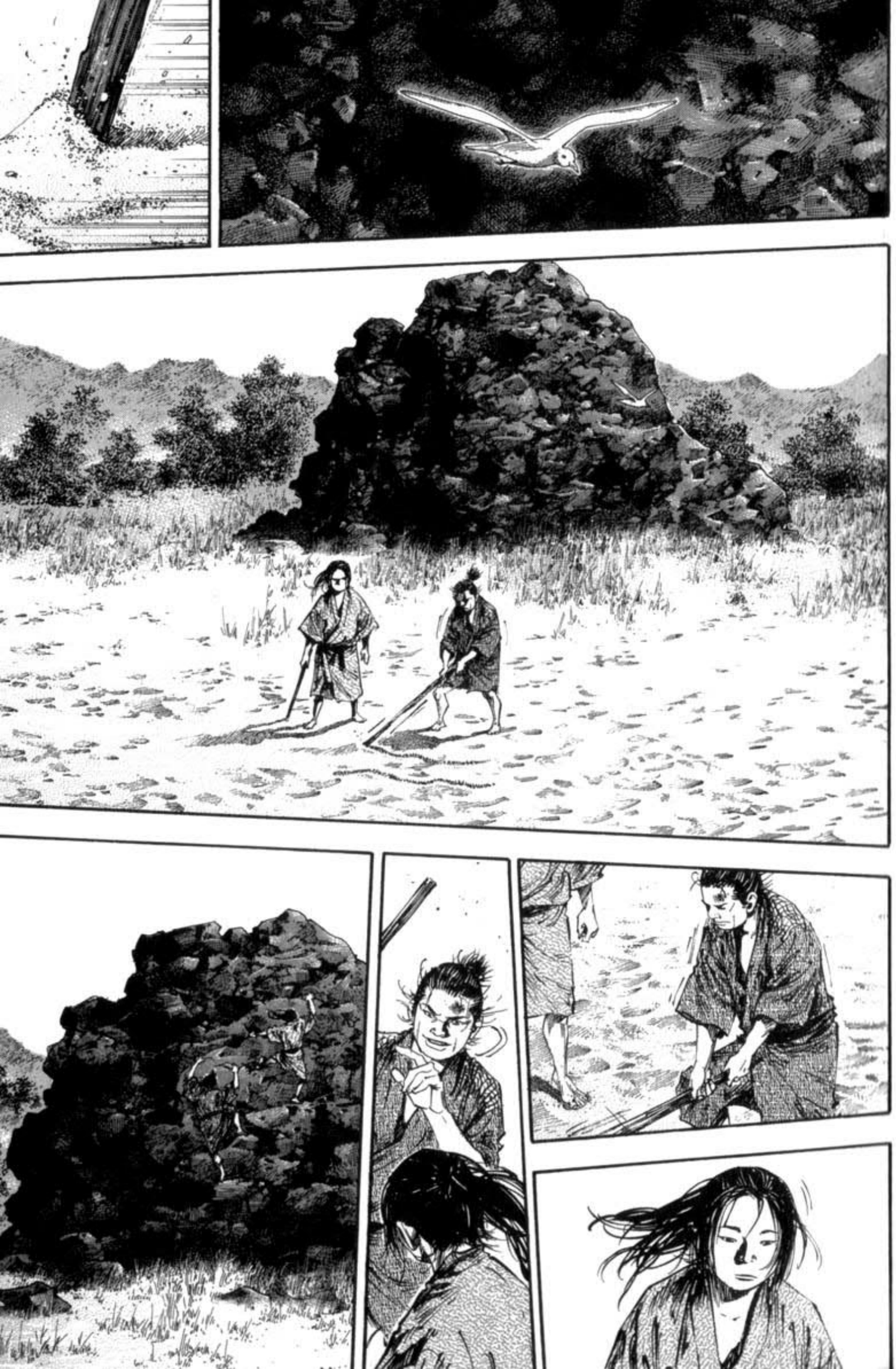
#144 | Master and Pupil


STRONG
...
自斎
JISAI



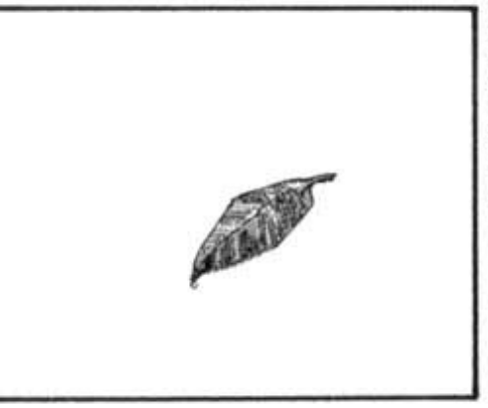
UNDER THE SUN

INVINCIBLE

JISAI
白斎

JII-AI...

.....
.....
SHUF
SHUF



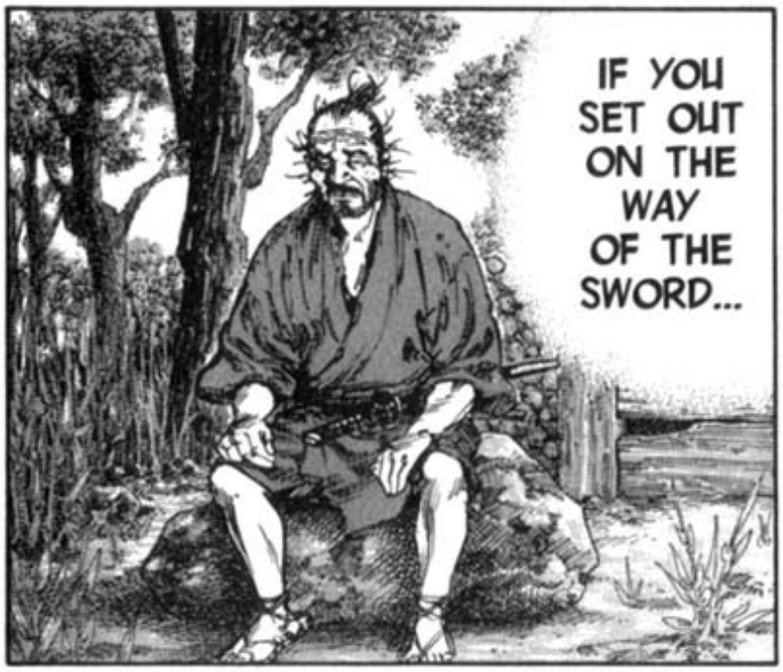
SO THERE YOU ARE!
THUD
NNGH!
WHUD

THUNK

I WON'T TEACH YOU THE SWORD.
FWOOOSH

WHUD
THWAK
HE'S GOT TALENT ...

...I WON'T TEACH HIM.
BUT THAT'S ALL THE MORE REASON...


IF YOU SET OUT ON THE WAY OF THE SWORD...

...YOU'RE DESTINED TO DIE UNLESS YOU'RE STRONG.

DEATH...

HMF!
HUF
YAH!
AYAH !!
YAHH !

HUF
FICH

FICH
FICH

AHH...

I WON'T TEACH YOU, KOJIRŌ.
KRIK
KRIK

I WON'T TEACH YOU, KOJIRŌ.
FICH
AHH...
FICH

Vagabond

(JII-AL..)

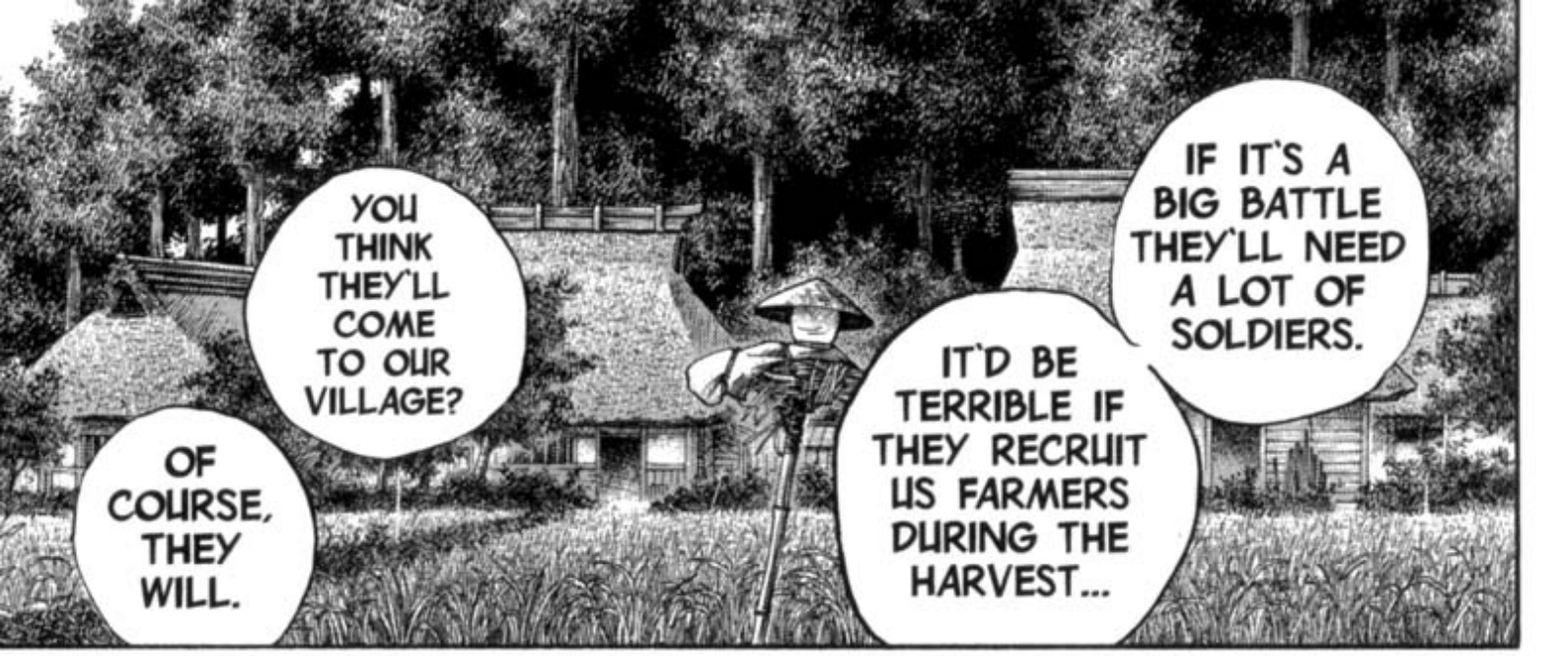
#145
The Fifth Year of Keicho
(1600 C.E.)

KLOP
KLOP
KLOP

KLOP
KLOP

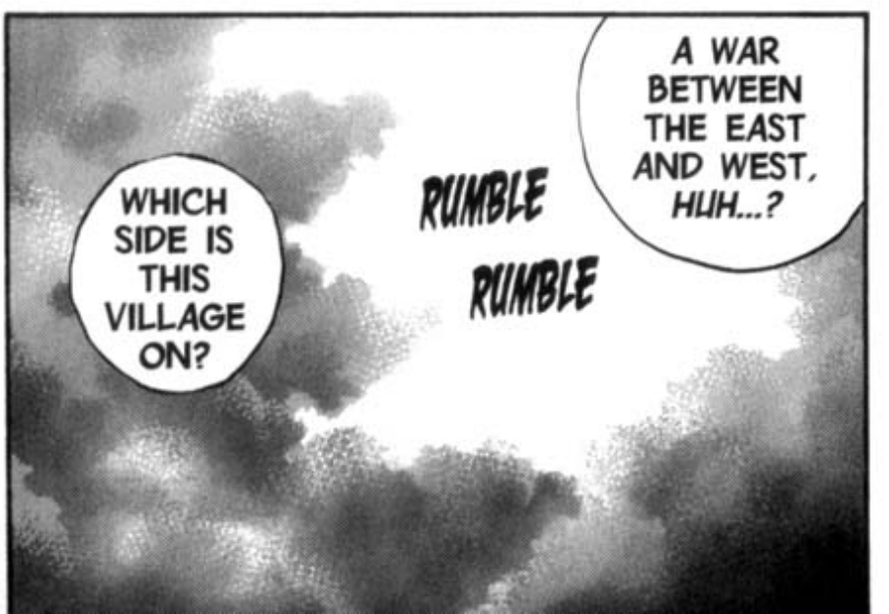
WHY DO THEY HAVE TO START THIS UP NOW? WE'RE SO BUSY IN THE SUMMER.

THEY'RE OFF TO WAR...


IF IT'S A BIG BATTLE THEY'LL NEED A LOT OF SOLDIERS.
IT'D BE TERRIBLE IF THEY RECRUIT US FARMERS DURING THE HARVEST...
YOU THINK THEY'LL COME TO OUR VILLAGE?
OF COURSE, THEY WILL.

I HEARD THAT THIS BATTLE BETWEEN THE LORDS OF ECHIZEN AND KAGA...
IT'S JUST AN EARLY SKIRMISH LEADING UP TO A CIVIL WAR.
THEY'RE JUST A STEP AHEAD OF EVERYONE ELSE, CHOOSING BETWEEN THE FORCES OF THE EAST AND WEST.
HEY... LOOKS LIKE RAIN.

WHO KNOWS... EITHER WAY...


A WAR BETWEEN THE EAST AND WEST, HUH...?
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
WHICH SIDE IS THIS VILLAGE ON?

...IT'S A REAL NUISANCE FOR US.

KLOP
KLOP

CIVIL WAR, EH...
RUMBLE
RUMBLE

I WANT TO GO FIGHT.
I WANT TO BE THERE, KOJIRŌ!!
WAR
FSSSHH
FWOOSH

HEY! TAKE ME WITH YOU!!
I'M KUSANAGI TENKI.
I'LL BE USEFUL OUT ON THE BATTLE-FIELD!!

TENKI...
HMM...
YOU ONLY THINK OF THE SPEED OF YOUR SWING.
SIR...
I THOUGHT SPEED WAS CRUCIAL...
YES...

YOU'RE SO OCCUPIED WITH YOUR SWORD YOU'VE LOST YOUR FOOTING.
THE STRONGEST FIGHTERS DON'T NECESSARILY HAVE THE FASTEST SWING, TENKI.

...YOU'RE GETTING FURTHER AND FURTHER AWAY FROM THE FUNDA-MENTALS.
...YOU PUT TOO MUCH STRENGTH IN YOUR ARMS...
YOU ARE IGNORING THE EARTH'S POWER...

YOU MUST TRY TO BE ONE WITH THE EARTH, TENKI.
I AM KUSANAGI TENKI, THE NUMBER ONE DISCIPLE OF KANEMAKI JISAI!
HERE, I COME, KOJIRŌ!!

FWOOSH
AHH
.....
DAMN. HOW DO YOU DO IT?!
THUD
NNGH!

FWOOSH
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
AHH...
HUF
HUF

HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
CAN'T HEAR ANYTHING BUT THE RAIN.
IT'S COMING DOWN HARD...

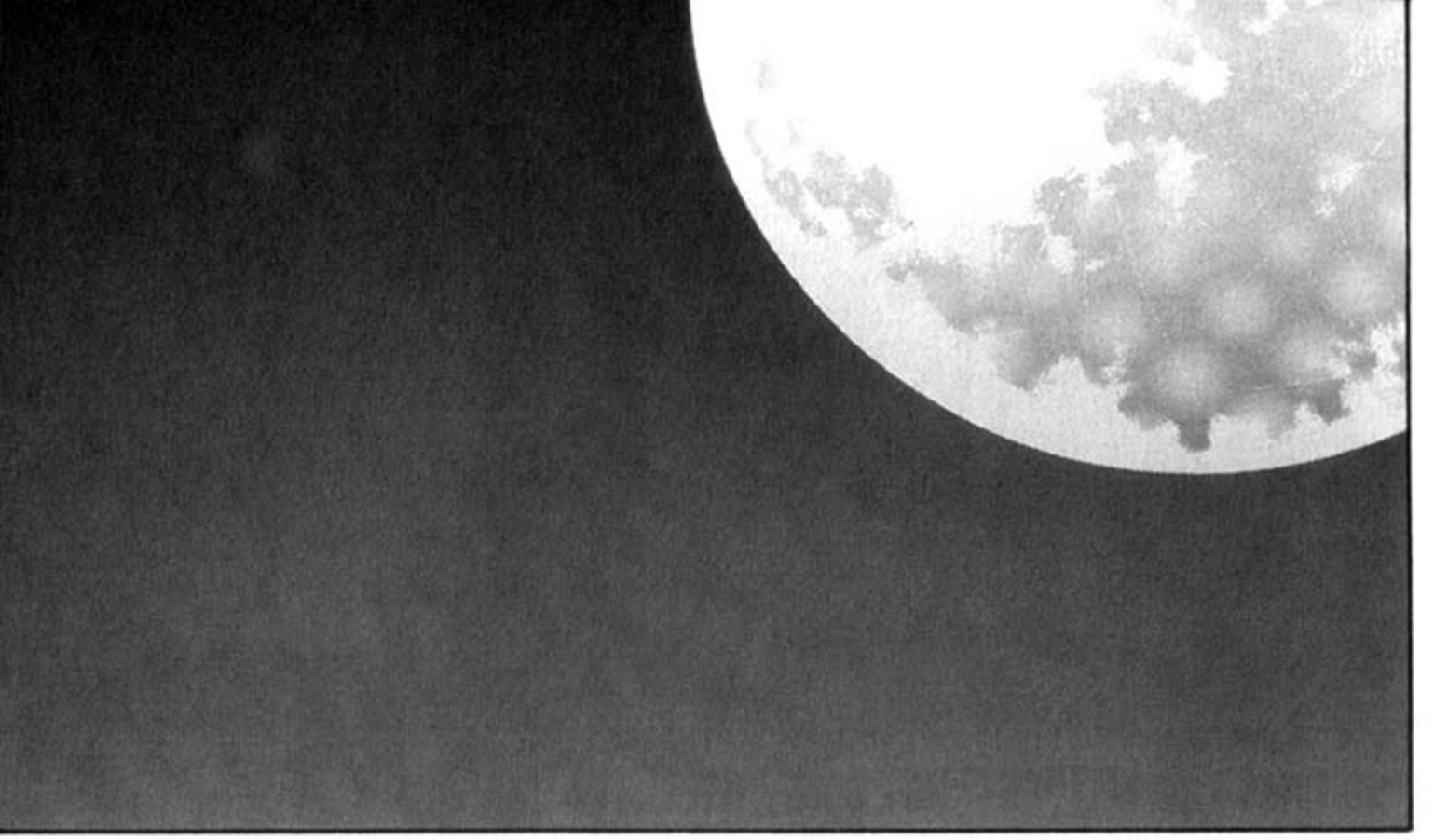
I WOULDN'T WANT TO FIGHT ON A DAY LIKE THIS.
I CAN'T HEAR THE OPPONENT'S FOOTSTEPS OR HIS BREATHING.
AHH!
HUF
HUF
DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT IT MEANS TO LIVE BY THE SWORD WHEN YOU CANNOT HEAR?
DO YOU UNDER-STAND, KOJIRŌ?
FOR YOU, EVERY DAY IS LIKE THIS DAY OF POURING RAIN.
KOJIRŌ ...

DO YOU REALIZE HOW FOOLISH AND DANGEROUS IT IS?
DO YOU UNDERSTAND ?

AHH!
?!
HOW DID YOU KNOW ?!
WHUD

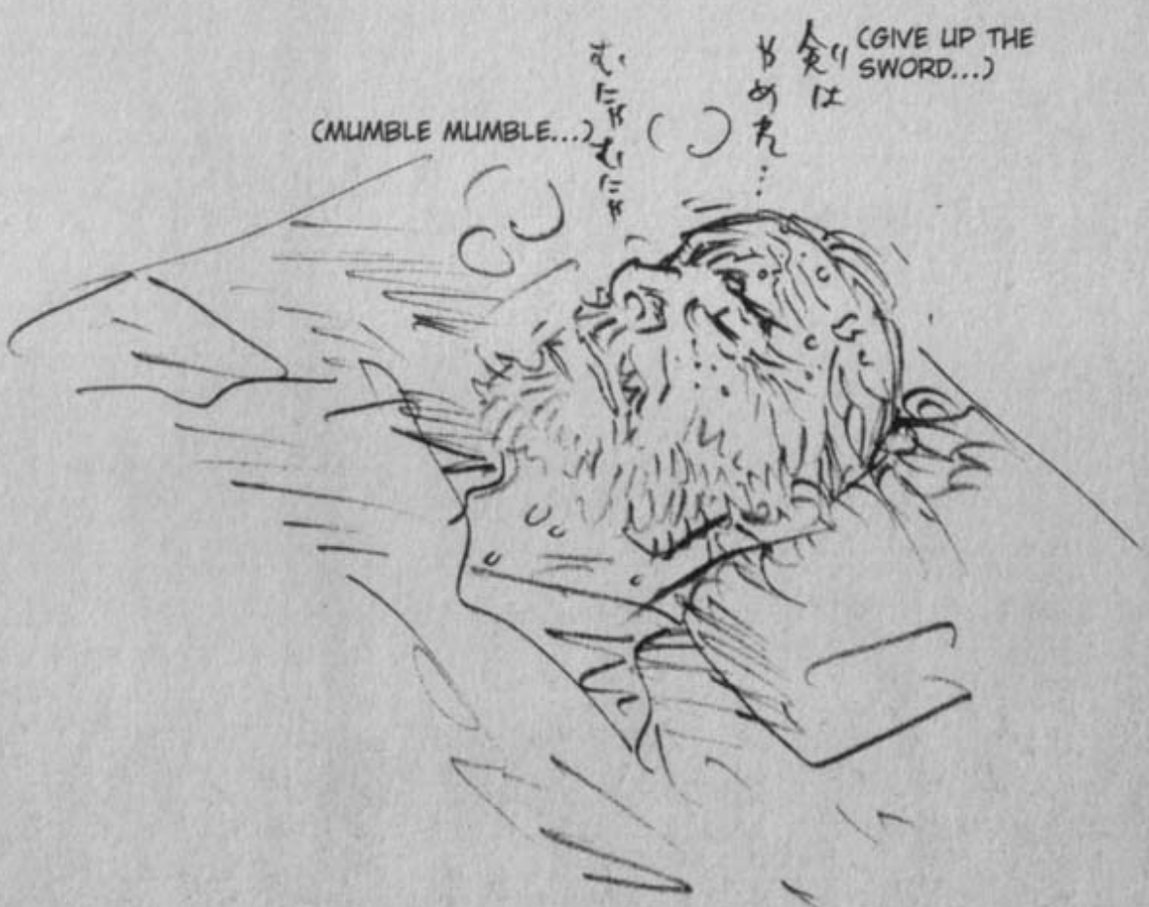
AHH!
I WON'T TEACH YOU THE SWORD, KOJIRŌ...
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF

YOU MIGHT LOSE YOUR VISION DURING A FIGHT...
HUF
HUF
MIGHT BE YOUR OWN SWEAT.
THERE ARE WEAPONS SUCH AS NEEDLES USED TO ATTACK THE EYES.
THE CAUSE MIGHT BE DUST...
AN INSECT ...
OR RAIN ...
THEN THERE'S THE SUN...
HUF
HUF
ANY DECENT FIGHTER WOULD SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY...
FSSSHH
HUF
AND YOU WOULD DIE.
HAK
HAK
GIVE UP THE SWORD.
KOJIRŌ ...



HUF
HUF
HUF

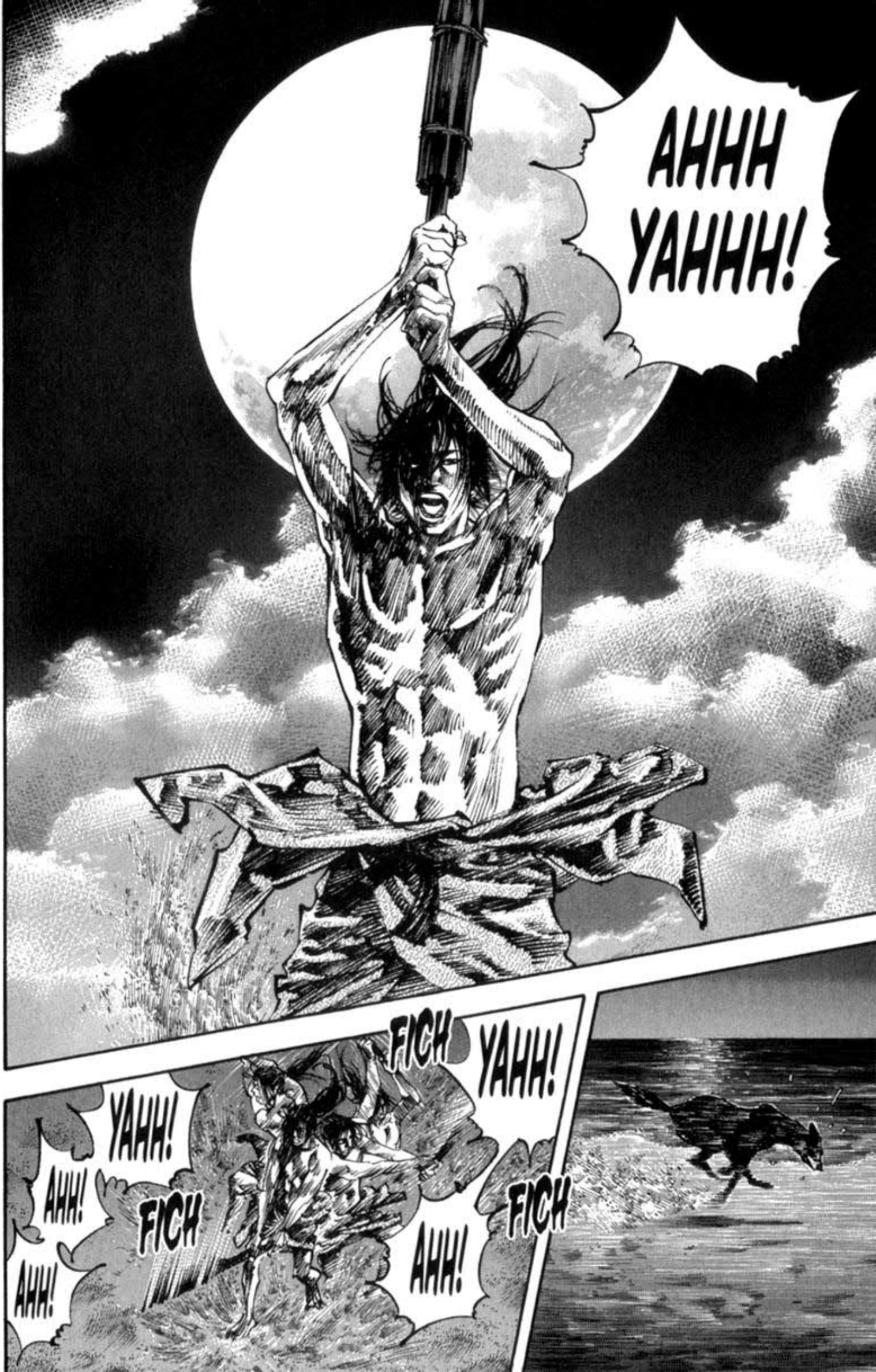
Vagabond


(GIVE UP THE SWORD...)
(MUMBLE MUMBLE...)

PANT
PANT
PANT
FSSH
FWP
FSSH
PANT
PANT
PANT
TMP

FSH
FSSSHH
FSSSHH
FSSSHH
FICH
#146
Senior Disciple

HUF
HUF
FWOOSH
TWITCH
HUF
FICH
HUF
HUF
HUF


AHHH YAHHH!
FICH
YAHH!
YAHH!
AHH!
FICH
AHH!
AHH!
FICH

WHAT IS THAT?
CAN'T SLEEP WITH THAT NOISE GOING ON...
HMM...
.....
AHH!
FSSSHH
FSSSHH

AHH
AHHHH...
UHH AHH
UAHHH...
AHH
UAHH
AHH...

TUGG
TUGG
TUGG
AHH...
FWAP
FWAP

IT'S THAT BOY...
THE SON OF SASAKI...
I THINK THE BOY'S NAME WAS KOJIRŌ...

YOU'VE RAISED HIM WELL THESE PAST TEN YEARS...
I AM QUITE IMPRESSED.
MASTER KANEMAKI...

SO THE GREAT WAR IS GOING TO BEGIN...
I WONDER IF SOME OF OUR MEN WILL BE TAKEN TOO.
DID YOU HEAR?
A DOZEN MEN FROM AKIHA VILLAGE WERE RECRUITED TO GO TO WAR!
IS THAT TRUE !?

I'M SURE THE OFFICIALS WILL BE SHOWING UP SOON.
IT DOESN'T MATTER TO US WHO ENDS UP AT THE TOP.
I WISH THEY'D JUST LEAVE US ALONE.

TREACHEROUS LOOKING MEN LIKE THAT LOT HAVE BEEN COMING AROUND TOO.
DON'T LOOK 'EM IN THE EYE...

WE'RE LIVING IN TROUBLED TIMES.
THAT'S FOR SURE.

HMM...?

HEY...

BANDIT SOLDIERS ...
THEY'RE GOING OFF TO WAR LOOKING LIKE THAT?

LOOK AT THIS! HE'S WEARING TWO SWORDS!
GOT A LOT OF NERVE FOR A LOWLY FARMER.

OH, IT'S JUST THAT YOUR OUTFITS ARE SO INTERESTING I COULDN'T RESIST LOOKING.
I'M ONLY A COUNTRY BUMPKIN WHO'S NEVER LEFT THIS VILLAGE.
WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING AT, YOU DAMN FARMER!?

HEY...
GIVE ME THOSE SWORDS.

YOU'RE IN RANGE OF MY ATTACK...

NO WAY YOU'LL MAKE NAMES FOR YOURSELVES...
THERE'S NO WAY YOU'LL SURVIVE OUT THERE IN BATTLE.

HEY, YOU BASTARD! I WAS TALKING TO YOU!
HUH?
TMP TMP
URGH...

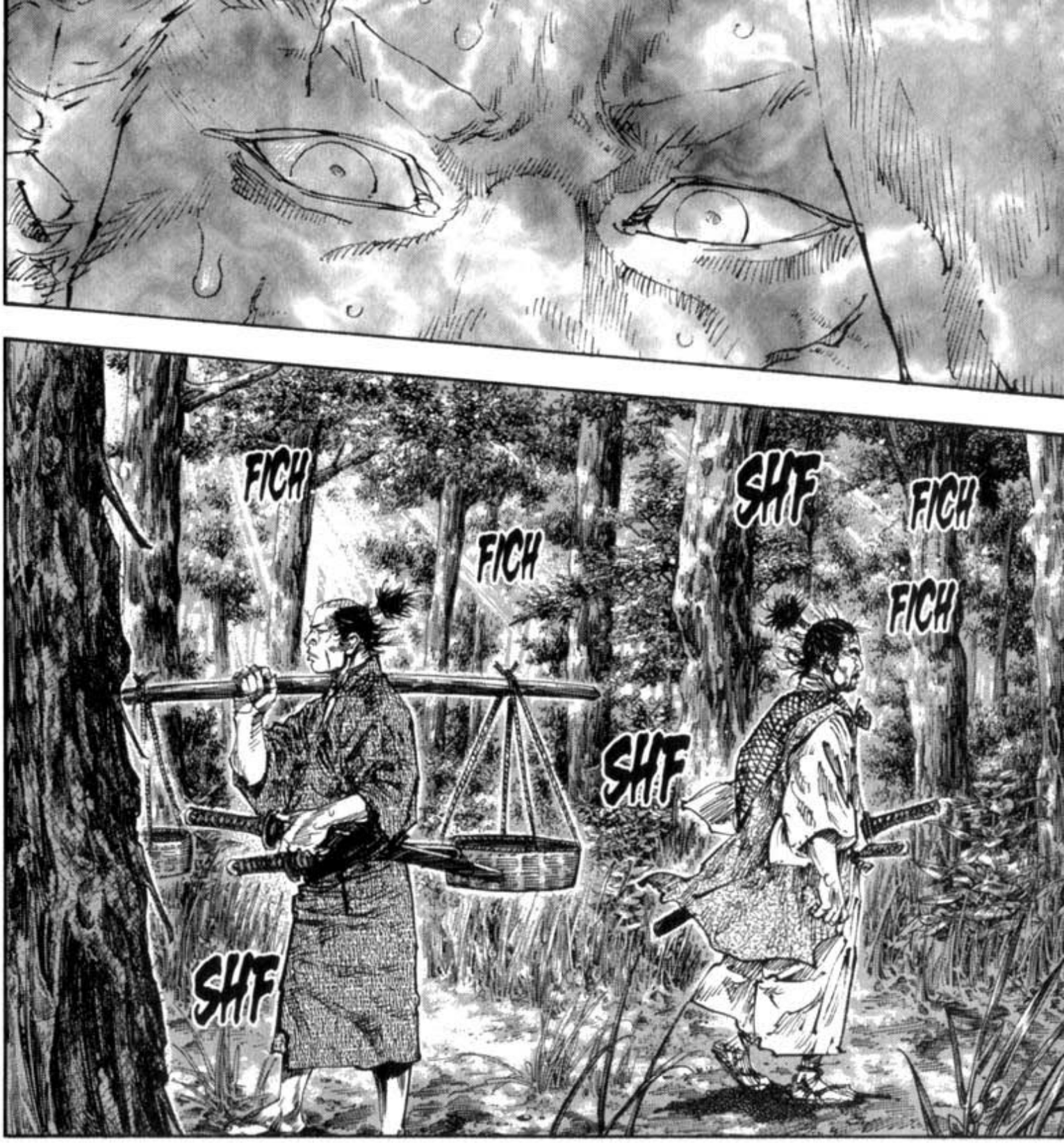
YOU'LL SURVIVE JUST LONG ENOUGH TO REACH THE BATTLEFIELD IF YOU'RE LUCKY.
THWAP
THWAP
.....

I MAY BE A FARMER...
...BUT I KNOW HOW TO USE A SWORD, TOO.

HA HA HA
HA HA! I'M NOT BAD AT ALL.
I'D BE MUCH MORE USEFUL ON THE BATTLE-FIELD THAN THE LIKES OF YOU!

FWICH
FICH
FICH
FICH

FSSH


FICH
FICH
SHF
SHF
FICH
FICH
SHF

VREEN
VREEN

YOU MUST BE ONE OF MASTER KANEMAKI'S DISCIPLES.

YOU'RE WRONG ABOUT THAT.

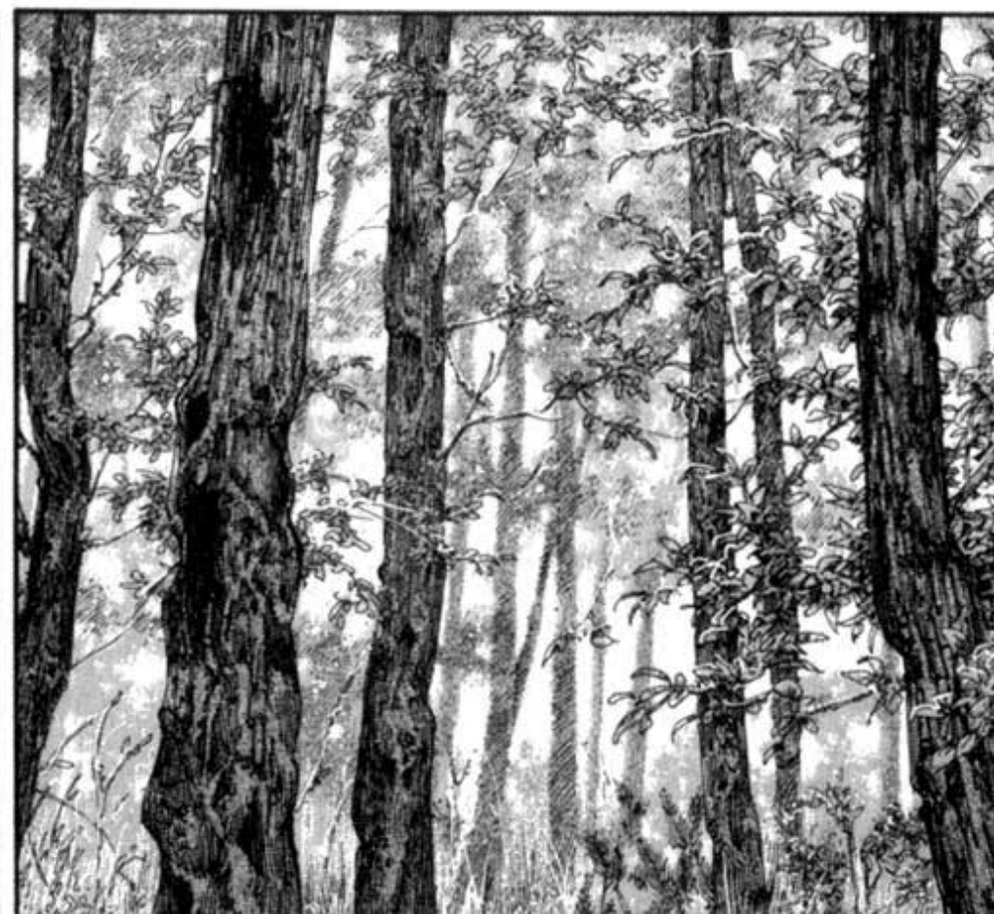
HM?

I'M KANEMAKI JISAI'S NUMBER ONE DISCIPLE, KUSANAGI TENKI!
HUH?
OH...
YES, I AM!

I'M KANEMAKI'S NUMBER ONE DISCIPLE.
WHAT ?!

VREEN
VREEN
VREEN
VREEN
VREEN
...
I WONDER IF HE'S CHANGED...

FSSSHH



THWAK
UMF!
FOOL! WHAT ARE YOU STARING AT?
ONCE YOU TAKE A SWING, YOU HAVE TO EITHER STEP BACK OR CONTINUE ATTACKING.
OTHER-WISE...

FÄK
AHH!
TUGG
KRIK

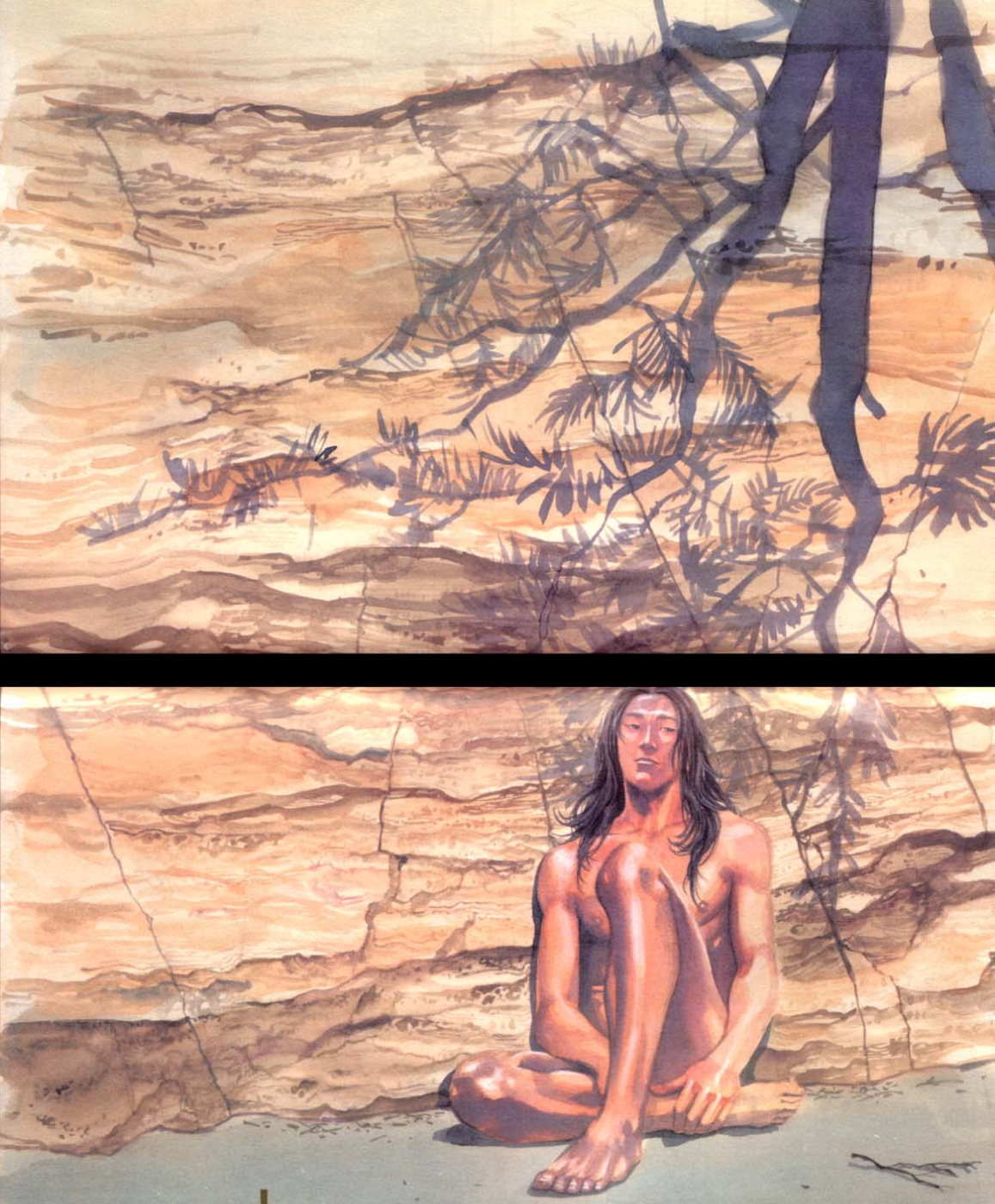
WHUD
FWOP
FWOP
FWOOSH
WHAT AMAZING QUICK-NESS!!
IN-CREDI-BLE!!
BUT...

FWOOSH
SHLUP
FWAP
FWAP
I DUG THAT HOLE!!

NO MATTER HOW YOU FOUGHT...
ONCE YOU'VE BEEN KILLED IT'S ALL OVER.
...THE WINNER IS THE ONLY ONE WITH A STORY LEFT TO TELL.
THAT'S WHY...
I WON'T TEACH YOU THE SWORD...
HUF
HUF
HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN THERE?!
HOW...
!!
FWOOSH
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF

YOU'RE TEACHING HIM QUITE ADMIRABLY.

I AM GLAD TO SEE YOU ARE WELL, MASTER.



#147 Jisai's Cocoon

I AM GLAD TO SEE YOU ARE WELL, MASTER.
YAGORŌ...

.....
FICH

HM!!
HE'S TALLER THAN ME!!

YAHH!

YOU'RE A BIG BOY.
SHIRK
GRB
AHH...
...!!
YOU OWE HIM SO MUCH.

DID YOU THINK YOU'D RAISE HIM UP TO BE A HOUSECAT?
WHAT?
BUT, MASTER ...
ALL BECAUSE YOU WANT HIM TO STAY BY YOUR SIDE TILL YOUR DYING DAY.
...YOU SPAR WITH HIM ALL THE WHILE CLAMORING, "I WON'T TEACH YOU THE SWORD."
I'M GUESSING ...
WHAT?

THIS ONE'S A TIGER...
JUST LIKE US.
A REAL TIGER...

HOW WOULD YOU KNOW, YAGORŌ?!
YOU JUST COME AROUND EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE AND YOU THINK YOU KNOW EVERYTHING!

I DIED ONCE...
THEN SEVENTEEN YEARS AGO...

...I MET KOJIRŌ AND BEGAN A NEW--

YOU WOULDN'T UNDER-STAND...
NO, FORGET IT.

.....

IT'S ALWAYS GOOD TO SEE YOU...
GO OFF TO THE BATTLE-FIELD.
ITŌ ITTŌSAI, FOUNDER OF THE ITTŌ-RYU STYLE OF SWORD-FIGHTING...
WHY DO YOU PERSIST ON COMING BACK HERE?
YAGORŌ-- NO, PERHAPS I SHOULD SAY...
A MAN WITH YOUR TALENTS...
ANY LORD WOULD WELCOME A MAN LIKE YOU WITH OPEN ARMS...
I'VE NEVER BEEN INTERESTED IN SUCCESS.
BESIDES, I WON'T SHARPEN MY SWORD TO GO INTO A BATTLE OF FIREARMS...
ANYWAY, I'VE NO DESIRE TO SEE YOU...
SO STOP PAYING ME THESE VISITS!!

FICH

TP
TP

A TIGER SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO LIVE AS A TIGER...
...AND TO DIE AS ONE AS WELL...

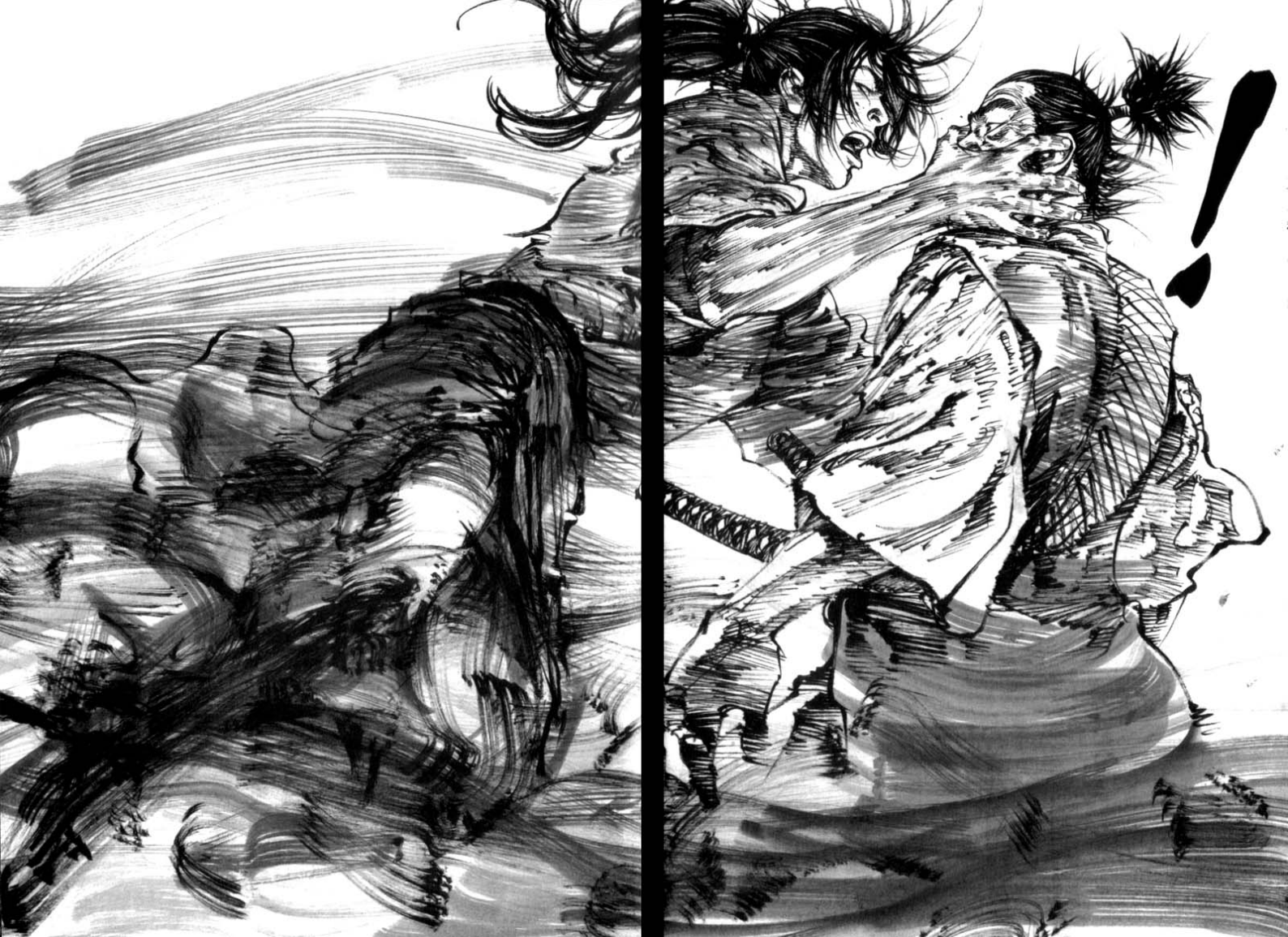
.....
YAGORŌ...

!
!!
HOW DARE YOU NOT FIGHT AGAINST YOUR MASTER WITH YOUR FULL STRENGTH? SHOW HIM SOME RESPECT!!

KRAK

FSH
FIP

AHH!
AHHH!
BUT YOU CAN'T HEAR ME...
FICH
FICH
FICH



!
FWISH

TUGG
TUGG
WHUD

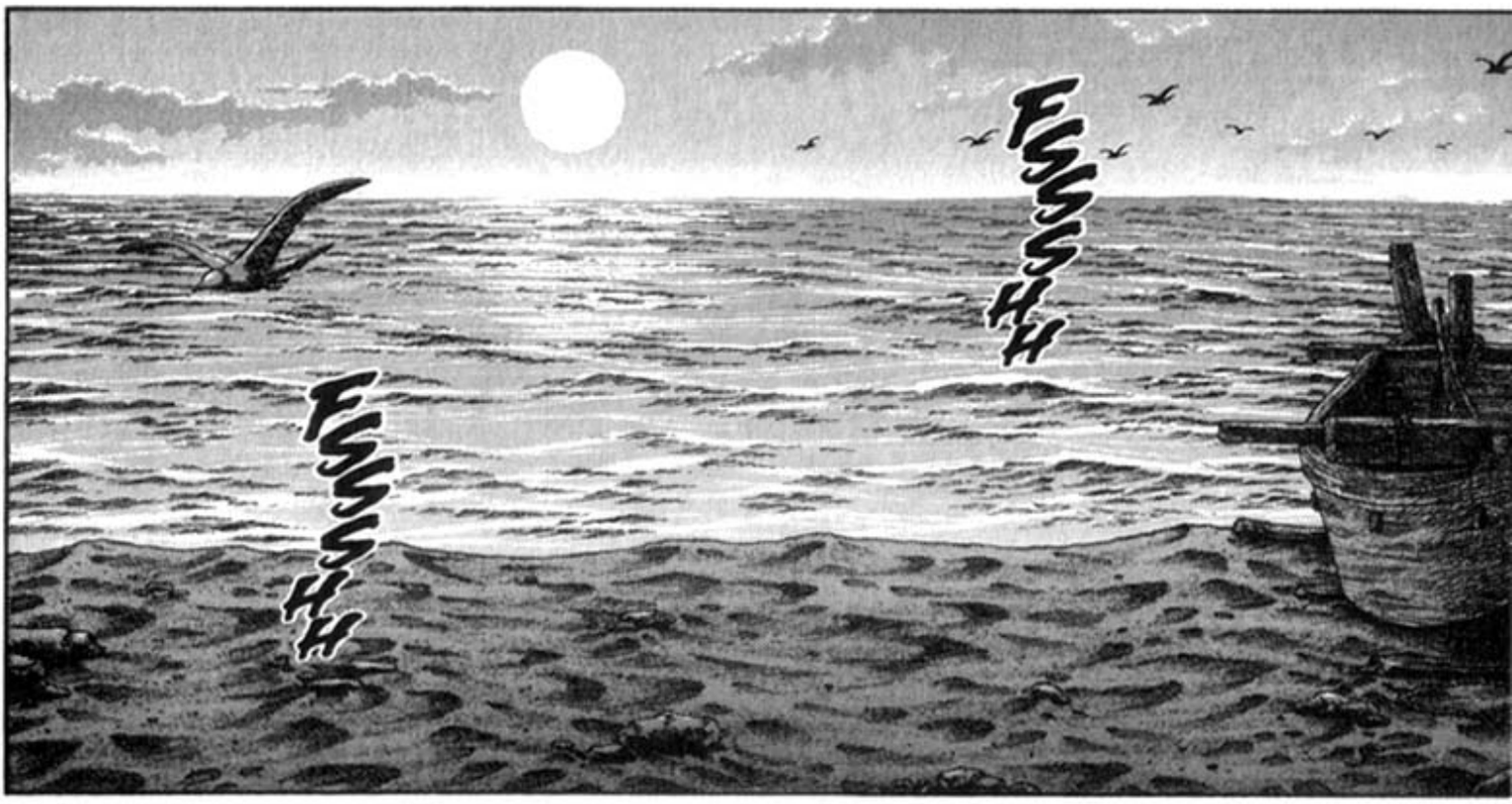
FWISSH
WHOOSH
!!
KOJIRŌ!
HA HA HA HA HA HA

SEE?!

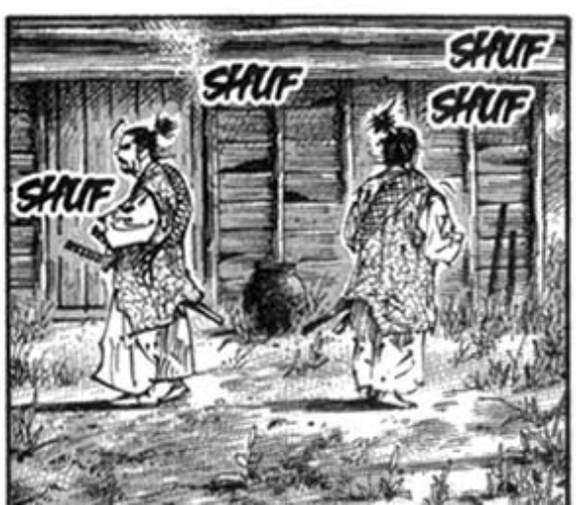
"A REAL TIGER..."
"JUST LIKE US."

"THIS ONE'S A TIGER."

"HOW DARE YOU NOT FIGHT AGAINST YOUR MASTER WITH YOUR FULL STRENGTH?! SHOW HIM SOME RESPECT!!"


FSSSSHH
FSSSSHH

GRMBL


SHUF
SHUF
SHUF
SHUF

AHH!
YOU STILL OUT THERE? GO AWAY!
OH, COME ON, MASTER!!
HEY!
WHAT ?
GO AWAY!
NOPE.
DON'T YOU WANT TO HEAR WHAT I'VE BEEN UP TO OVER A BOWL OF PORRIDGE?!
AREN'T YOU BEING A LITTLE HARSH ON YOUR DISCIPLE? I'VE GONE OUT OF MY WAY TO VISIT YOU. IT'S BEEN OVER A DOZEN YEARS!
BACK IN THE DAYS OF THE KANEMAKI SCHOOL, THE SENIOR'S ORDERS WERE AS ABSOLUTE AS THE MASTER'S!
BUT YOU CAN'T HEAR ME, CAN YOU?
I'M YOUR SENIOR. FETCH ME A BOWL OF PORRIDGE!!
MNCH MNCH
HEY, KOJIRŌ !!
FWIP

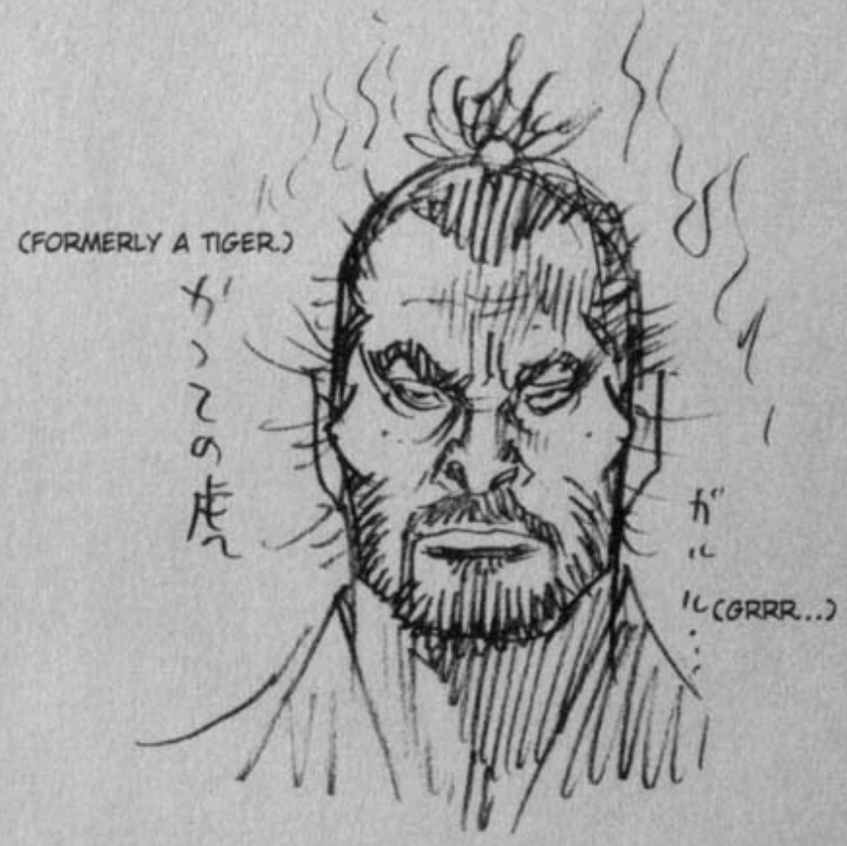
A FIRE.

AHH!

THERE HE IS.
ITTŌSAI !!

AHH
AHH!
...!!
AUHH!

Vagabond


(FORMERLY A TIGER.)
がっての虎
が
に
に(GRRR...)

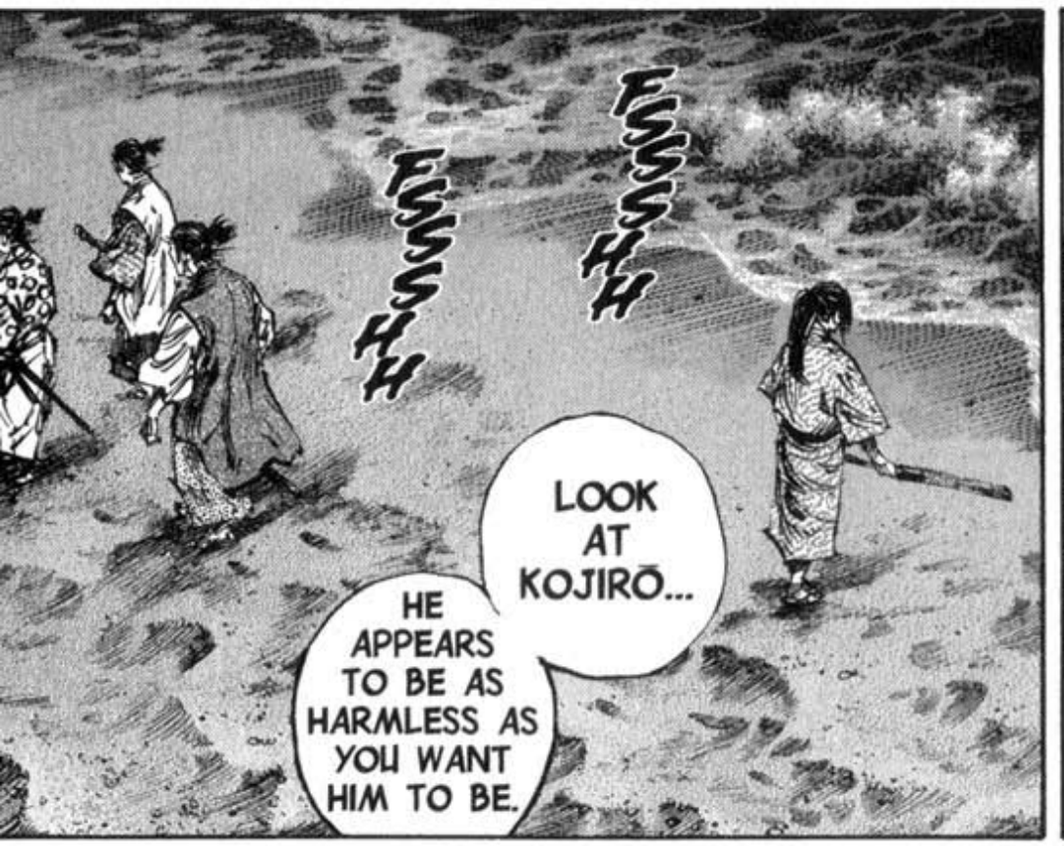
#148 Tiger

THAT'S NOT ITTŌSAI.
FSSSHH
WHO ARE YOU?
HM?!
FSSSHH

FWIP
SMIRK
HEY!
WHO ARE YOU?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING OUT AT THIS LATE HOUR?

?
FSH
HEY!
.....
FICH
.....
FICH
.....
HMM?
TRAINING SO LATE AT NIGHT.
FICH
FICH
THAT'S THE SPIRIT!

IS HE IGNORING ME?
WHAT A HAUGHTY BRAT...


FSSSHH
FSSSHH
LOOK AT KOJIRŌ...
HE APPEARS TO BE AS HARMLESS AS YOU WANT HIM TO BE.

.....
MASTER KANEMAKI.

WATCHING THIS ARROGANT GROUP...
...I CAN TELL...

SKRCH
SKRCH
HOWEVER ...

KOJIRŌ'S GETTING WORKED UP INSIDE.
WHAT CAN HE BE THINKING ...?
PERHAPS HE'S THINKING, "YOU BASTARD!"
NO... THAT'S NOT IT.
"I WANT TO CHALLENGE THEM!"
"WITH THE SWORD..."
"AGAINST ALL MY TRAINING..."

"WHO'LL BE LEFT STANDING..."
"...AFTER I FIGHT THEM WITH ALL MY STRENGTH?!"

"OF COURSE, IT'LL BE ME!!"
THAT'S HOW HE FEELS.

HE CAN'T HELP HIMSELF!!
HA HA HA! HE'S ABOUT TO BURST!!
THAT'S HOW TIGERS ARE!! RIGHT, KOJIRŌ?!

COME ON...
.....
TUMP

おい次郎!
KOJIRŌ!!

...!!
KEEP YOUR MOUTH SHUT, ITŌ!!
THAT'S RIGHT...
I'LL PROVE IT TO YOU, IF YOU'D LIKE.
ARE YOU SAYING YOU HAVE NOTHING MORE TO LEARN FROM ME...?
YAGORŌ...

HMM ...?
.....
INVINCIBLE...

MASTER, IF YOU ARE THE MAN ON TOP...
...THEN WHAT HAVE I TO LOOK FORWARD TO AFTER I DEFEAT YOU?
WHEN I THINK THAT THIS GAME WILL SOON COME TO AN END...
YOU CALL THE SWORD A GAME?!
...I FEEL...
I FEEL TERRIBLY LONELY.

TERRIBLY LONELY...
GASP!
FWOOSH

!!
ITTŌSAI!!

FICH
FICH

COME ON.

SMIRK

KOJIRŌ!

AHH...

HA HA HA!
TUMP

HM?!

FP
FP
FP
FP
WHAT THE--?!
FP
FP
FP
7 POINTS
6 POINTS
8 POINTS
七点
六点
八点
THERE NOW!!

SHISH
IT'S A BIG WORLD OUT THERE!!
10,000 POINTS
FWOOSH
THE GAME'S NOT OVER YET!!

HM?
ITTŌSAI!!

9 POINTS

IT'S EASY! YOU FELLOWS KEEP HOUNDING AFTER ME.
SO YOU'VE RATED OUR SKILL LEVEL...
...BUT HOW WOULD YOU KNOW?

HUH?

GIVE ME ONE TOO, MASTER ITŌ.
HEY! YOU DIDN'T GIVE ME A SCORE.

BUT YOU KEEP ON RUNNING AWAY WITHOUT EVEN DRAWING YOUR SWORD.

YOU MUST KNOW WHO I AM!!

Vagabond

(HAL..)
(FLAP FLAP FLAP)

#149 | Blood Bath

HUF
HUF
HUF

KOJIRŌ...

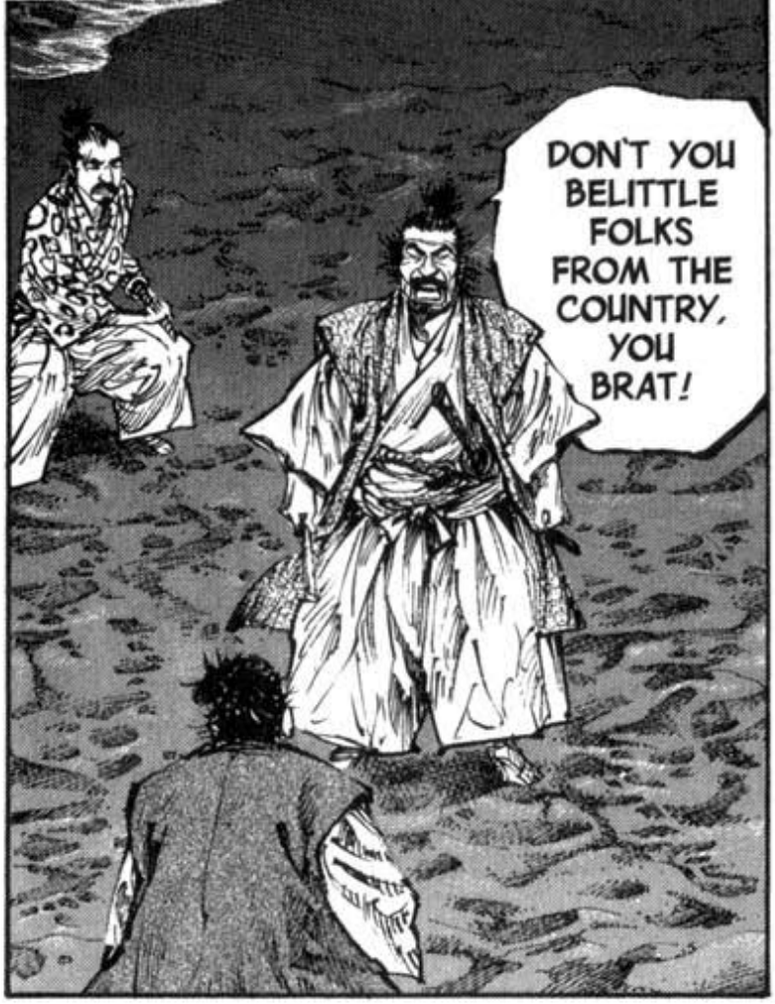
HAVEN'T YOU EVER BEEN TO KYOTO?!
YOU *MUST* KNOW WHO I AM!!
WELL?

.....
FWIP FWIP
FICH
FWAP
.....
ALLOW ME TO SPEAK FRANKLY...
SO HOW DO YOU RATE ME, MASTER ITTŌSAI?
ITTŌSAI ...
HMM ...

I AM TAKADA SANNOJŌ.
WE ARE NOT COMING AFTER YOU HERE AS A GROUP.
THE FIVE OF US MERELY SHARE A COMMON AIM.
WE SEEK OUT FOMIDABLE SWORDSMEN ...
...WHOM WE CHALLENGE TO IMPROVE OUR SKILLS.
WE DO NOT DESIRE TO OUTNUMBER YOU. EACH OF US SEEKS AN INDIVIDUAL MATCH AGAINST YOU.
THERE ISN'T A SWORDSMAN AROUND WHO DOESN'T KNOW OF YOUR DISTINGUISHED REPUTATION.
JUST STANDING HERE IN FRONT OF YOU, I CAN ALREADY SENSE YOUR INCREDIBLE BLOOD-THIRST...
PLEASE, SIR...
I DESIRE A MATCH AGAINST YOU!!

AHH!!

!?
WHUD
NNGH!


DON'T YOU BELITTLE FOLKS FROM THE COUNTRY, YOU BRAT!

HAH
OF COURSE I'VE BEEN TO KYOTO.

HUH?!

DON'T YOU UNDER-ESTIMATE ME!
I'M THE SECOND SON OF YOSHIOKA KEMPŌ...

HA HA HA HA HA!
YOU HAVE TO RELY ON YOUR FATHER'S NAME TO IMPRESS ME?!
...!!
HMPH
FWIP
KOJIRŌ!

YOU LOOK LIKE YOU WANT TO JOIN US.
WE'RE HAVING LOTS OF FUN.
COME ON...
HMM?
THMP THMP

THMP THMP
THMP THMP
YOSHIOKA KEMPŌ...
SAYING THAT NAME MIGHT HELP YOUR REPUTATION...
...!!
WAIT...
BUT PERHAPS YOU SHOULD BEWARE...
?
THAT'S NOT WHY I MENTIONED MY FATHER'S NAME.
COME NOW...
CALM DOWN...
I...

FOR QUITE SOME TIME NOW, YOU'VE BEEN STANDING WITHIN MY SWORD'S RANGE.

UNGH!

.....

FCH
!
FSSSHHH
GASP
!
ANOTHER ONE FROM THE YOSHIOKA ...

SO YOU HAVE A BABYSITTER.
HOW CUTE!

THAT'S WHY YOU DON'T RATE A SCORE!

WE'RE BEING OVER-WHELMED ...
ALL FIVE OF US, BY A SINGLE MAN ...!!
THMP THMP
THMP THMP
THMP THMP

FWOOSH
WHUMP
FICH
FICH

CUT EACH OTHER DOWN.

YOU'RE NO FLOCK OF SHEEP...
...IF YOU WANT TO CHALLENGE ME...
...THEN FIGHT YOUR WAY TO THE TOP.

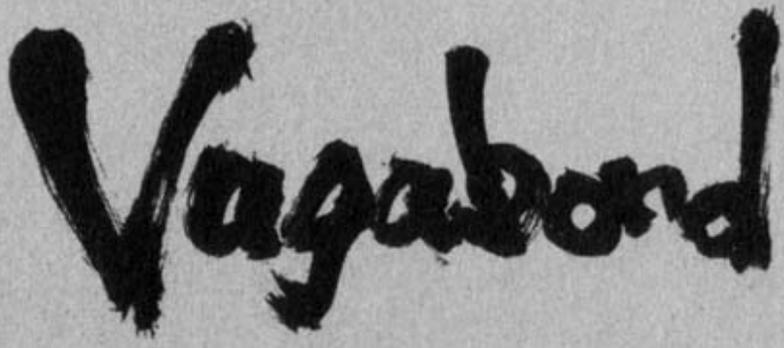
GULP
THMP
THMP
THMP
THMP
.....

I'LL TAKE ON ANYONE.
DRAW...
FUSSHH

FICH
HUF
HUF
HUF
FICH
FICH
WHERE ARE YOU, KOJIRŌ?
FICH
HUF
HUF
"TERRIBLY LONELY..."
FICH
HE'S DEAF...
HUF
HE'S VERY KIND-HEARTED...
FICH
FICH
HUF
HUF
STILL A CHILD...

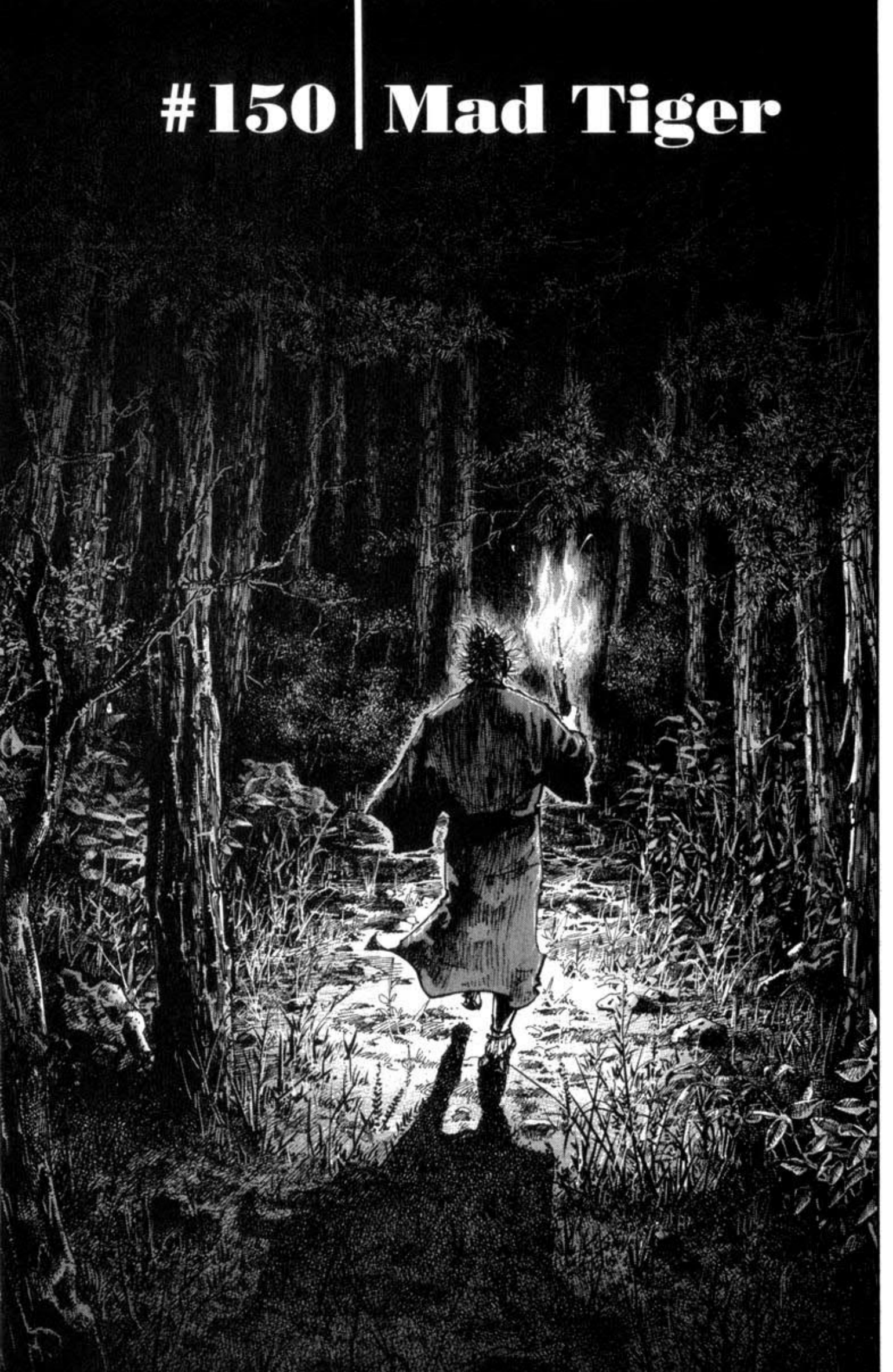
KOJIRŌ, THAT PATH IS NOT FOR YOU...!
DON'T GO THERE.
THE SWORD CAN DRIVE MEN INSANE.

...I JUST WANTED TO IMPRESS HIM...!
WHAT'S HAPPENING HERE?!
I CAME TO CHALLENGE ITTOSAI. BUT NOW, ALL OF A SUDDEN!...
IT'S SO ODD...

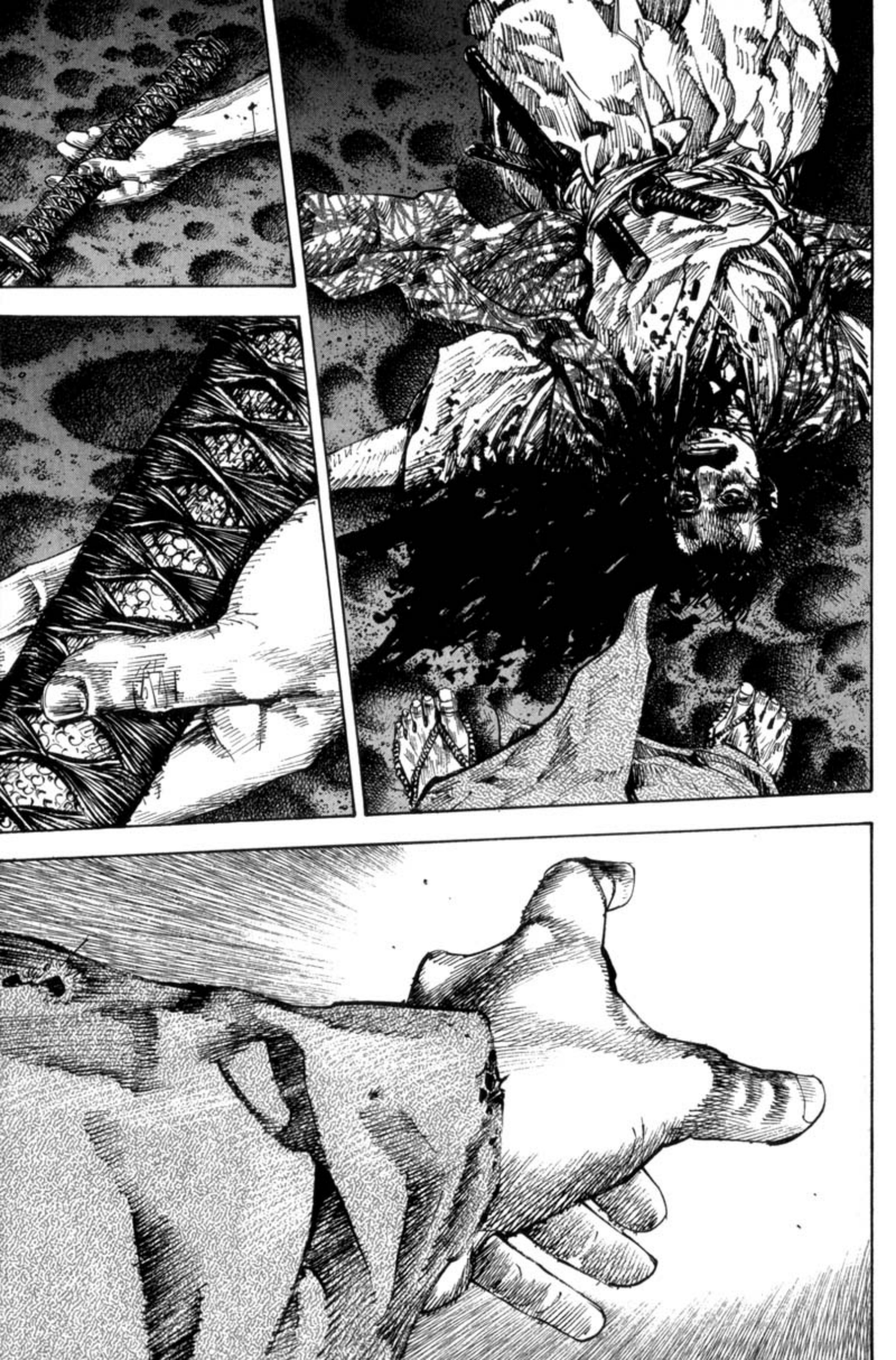

Vagabond

(BA-BUMP BA-
BUMP BA-BUMP)

#150 | Mad Tiger



FSSSHH
SPLSSH
FSSSHH
FSSSHH
FSSSHH



FSSSHH
FSSSHH
FSSSHH

uuuu...
うー
uuuu...
うー
uuuu...
うー
uuuu...

AND EVEN IF HE DID TAKE OYAMA BY SURPRISE...
...HE SEEMS VERY CAPABLE.
HE MAY LOOK NAÏVE...
THIS KID!!
URRR...
HIS INSIDES ARE--
PLEASE, FINISH ME OFF...
...?!
KILL ME...
FINISH ME OFF...
I LOST !!
.....

AHH...
KOJIRŌ ...
YOU DON'T EVEN FLINCH AT THE SIGHT OF HIS GUTS SPILLED OUT ON THE GROUND.
YOU WON'T LIVE LONG...
SPLSSH

ZHIP
FICH
IS THAT A SMILE?

THMP
THMP

I'VE NEVER ACTUALLY CUT ANYONE BEFORE.

HUF
HUF
HUF
THMP
THMP

AHH...
AHH UHH...
HOW CAN HE BE SO CALM...?!
THMP THMP
HE'S MUCH YOUNGER THAN ME...
THMP THMP
AHH...

HMMM...

...
FICH
IT'S MAKING ME ANGRY!!
I AM TAKADA SANNOJŌ. NOW STATE *YOUR* NAME...
...!
UEDA, PLEASE STEP ASIDE.
FCH
HE MAY BE A BOY, BUT ASSAILING US LIKE THIS...

TUMP
!
TMP

NNGH!
URR!
NNGH!
NNGH!

HUF
HUF
FICH
SPLSH

!!

HUF
HUF
HUF
WHAT
--?!

HUF
HUF
HUF

AHH...
UHHAHH...
TYP
HUF
HUF
HUF
HMPH

HE'S NUMB...
THUNK
FWOOSH
TUMP
FICH

YOU...
AHH...
YOU'RE MAD...

About the Author

VAGABOND was created by Takehiko Inoue, author of the best-selling manga *SLAM DUNK*, with over 100 million copies in print worldwide. Inoue received the 2000 Media Arts award for Manga from the Japanese Ministry of Culture as well as the 2000 Kodansha Award for best manga for his work on *VAGABOND*. In 2002, *VAGABOND* received the prestigious Tezuka award for best manga. Most recently, Inoue has been nominated for a 2004 Eisner Award for best writer/artist. To date *VAGABOND* has sold over 22 million copies throughout the world. In addition to his numerous manga titles, Inoue also created the character designs for the PlayStation basketball game, *ONE ON ONE*.

About *VAGABOND* and Miyamoto Musashi

Takehiko Inoue's *VAGABOND*, based on Eiji Yoshikawa's novel *MUSASHI*, is a fictional account of the life of Miyamoto Musashi (1584-1645). The historical figure Miyamoto Musashi, author of the philosophical strategy guide *A BOOK OF FIVE RINGS*, was a master of the sword and was revered as a "sword-saint." He founded the Niten Ichi style of sword fighting, which is typified by fighting with both long and short swords at once—holding the long sword with the right hand and the short sword with the left. Musashi was also a master of the "gentler arts"—he was a master of *sumi-e* (black ink drawings), metalworking, and woodcarving. The films that comprise *THE SAMURAI TRILOGY* directed by Hiroshi Inagaki and starring Toshiro Mifune, were also based on Yoshikawa's *MUSASHI*. Inspired by the huge success of *VAGABOND* in Japan, in 2003 NHK produced the historical period drama *MUSASHI*. Also based on Yoshikawa's novel, this drama stars kabuki actor Shinnosuke Ichikawa as Musashi and TV star Ryoko Yonekura as Otsu.

A note on names:

The names presented within the context of this comic are presented in the traditional Japanese order—surname followed by first name. "Miyamoto" is Miyamoto Musashi's last name and "Musashi" is his first name. The name of the creator of *VAGABOND*, however, has been presented first name first, last name second. "Takehiko" is the author's first name and "Inoue" is his last name.

Glossary and Extraneous Background Information

Kaga
Located in present day Ishikawa Prefecture.

Echizen
Located in the northern part of present day Fukui Prefecture.

Ito Ittosai (Dates unknown)
Founder of the Itto-ryu school of sword fighting. Before establishing his own style, Ittosai is said to have studied a variant of the Chujo-ryu style of sword fighting under Kanemaki Jisai's instruction.

Sasaki Kojiro
The legendary archrival of Miyamoto Musashi. Kojiro is believed to have studied the Chujo-ryu style of swordsmanship under the instruction of either Toda Seigen or Kanemaki Jisai. Kojiro was renowned for his *Tubame-gaeshi*, or "swallow-cut" technique which was inspired by the movement of a swallow in flight.

The Sengoku Period and the Battle of Sekigahara
The Warring States or *Sengoku* period (1482-1558) in Japan was a time of chaos and conflict. Central authorities, in the form of the imperial court and the shogunate, had grown increasingly weaker and the land was effectively ruled autonomously by numerous *daimyo* (domainal lords). Looking to expand their spheres of control, the *daimyo* were constantly at war with each other. One *daimyo* in particular, Oda Nobunaga, set out on a mission to unify Japan by means of conquest. Incredibly successful, by the time of his assassination in 1582, he managed to control approximately one-third of all of Japan. One of Nobunaga's chief generals, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, became Nobunaga's successor to carry on the quest for unification. Through a process of conquest and conciliation, Hideyoshi succeeded in creating an orderly federation amongst the *daimyo,* and by 1590, order was restored to Japan under Hideyoshi's rule. Hideyoshi's death in 1598, however, presented the question of succession. Most of the *daimyo* from the domains in the west remained loyal to the Toyotomi Clan and its five-year-old heir, Toyotomi Hideyori. Tokugawa Ieyasu, however, leading the major *daimyo* from central and eastern Japan, challenged the Toyotomi clan's leadership. The two sides clashed at the Battle of Sekigahara (1600) in Mino (located in present day Gifu Prefecture) where the Tokugawa claimed an overwhelming victory. From that point on, the Tokugawa clan would effectively rule Japan for the next 250 years.

Takuan Soho (1573-1645)
A monk of the Rinzai sect of Zen Buddhism, by the time Takuan was 37, he was appointed abbot of the leading temple of the Rinzai sect, Daitokuji. Takuan was an important figure whose acute and brutally honest advice was sought by influential and powerful figures such as Emperor Go Mizuno and the shogun Tokugawa Iemitsu. His correspondence to Yagyu Munenori discussing Zen and swordsmanship entitled *THE UNFETTERED MIND* has become an influential treatise in both the areas of philosophy and martial arts. The pickled daikon radish, *takuan*, also bears his name.

The Yagyu Clan
Yagyu Muneyoshi Sekishusai (1527-1606) was the founder of the famed Yagyu-Shinkage school of sword fighting. His son Yagyu Munenori (1571-1646) was one of Tokugawa's key generals at the Battle of Sekigahara. Munenori was appointed as the official fencing instructor of the Tokugawa Clan, and in 1632 the Yagyu were appointed as the *ometsuke*—responsible for the surveillance of the *daimyo*. Although the Yagyu clan has been depicted in Kazuo Koike's *LONE WOLF AND CUB* as the plotters of the downfall of Itto Ogami, the general Japanese popular culture take on the Yagyu Clan is more positive. More specifically, Munenori's son, Yagyu Jubei (1607-1650), is viewed as a wandering hero protecting the people from evildoers.

Yoshioka Kempo (dates unknown)
A distinguished warrior during the *Sengoku* period (1482-1558) and the founder of the renowned Yoshioka school of sword fighting. Yoshioka Kempo mastered the Kyohachi style of swordmanship and then modified it to form the Yoshioka style. In the context of Inoue's *VAGABOND,* as well as in Yoshikawa's *MUSASHI*, Yoshioka Seijuro and Denshichiro are Kempo's sons who are historically thought to have dueled with Miyamoto Musashi on numerous occasions.

editor's choice

VIZ Graphic Novel

$9.95 USA/$14.50 CAN

"...Inoue's skills as a comics creator makes *VAGABOND* outstanding. This really is one of the best comics currently being produced. I buy every book as soon as it's published and once you take a look yourself, you'll do the same."
—Greg McElhatton, *icomics.com*

Sasaki Kojiro, renowned for his deadly "swallow-cut," is the man destined to be sword-saint Miyamoto Musashi's greatest rival and opponent in the most well–known duel in the annals of Japanese history. This volume further explores the background of the abandoned deaf orphan Kojiro as he comes of age and develops into a bloodthirsty swordsman with sublime skills.

www.viz.com

This book reads from right to left.

ISBN 1-59116-454-0

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